

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM USLO PEKING

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TAGS: OEXC CH

SUBJECT: CHINESE ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION

REF: STATE 182080

1. PER INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, USLO OFFICERS BROOKS AND PASCOE MET WITH MFA INFORMATION DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR HSIAO TEH ON AUGUST 6 TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON RETURN OF CHINESE ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION OBJECTS TO PRC. BROOKS, AFTER NOTING THAT DEPARTMENT HAD INFORMED US OF PRCLO'S SUGGESTION THAT WE DISCUSS RETURN OF OBJECTS IN PEKING, ASKED HSIAO WHETHER CHINESE SIDE HAD ANY VIEWS IT WOULD LIKE TO STATE. HSIAO REPLIED THAT THE CHINESE HAD NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS QUESTION IN DETAIL AND ASKED FOR OUR THOUGHTS.

2. BROOKS ACCORDINGLY DREW ON REFTEL TO OUTLINE PRELIMINARY US THINKING FOR RETURN OF THE OBJECTS. HSIAO, WHO HAD WITHHELD COMMENT ON THE VARIOUS SUBJECTS UNTIL BROOKS HAD COMPLETED THE GENERAL PRESENTATION, THEN SAID THAT WHILE HE WOULD HAVE TO REVIEW THESE MATTERS WITH THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED, HE COULD FOR NOW MAKE SOME "PERSONAL" OBSERVATIONS ON THE VARIOUS SUBJECTS RAISED BY THE AMERICAN SIDE.

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A. TRANSPORTATION: HSIAO SAID IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT THE SPECIAL AIRPLANES SHOULD OBVIOUSLY BRING THE OBJECTS ON TO PEKING SINCE IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL TO TRANSHIP THEM AT SHANGHAI. HE ASKED US TO PROVIDE THE USUAL FLIGHT DATA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

B. PERSONNEL: HAI SO SAID US MUSEUM SPECIALISTS WOULD AS A MATTER OF COURSE HAVE TO BE ON THE AIRPLANES TO EFFECT THE TRANSFER OF THE OBJECTS IN PEKING. AS FOR THE CHINESE CURATORS, HE SAID THAT IN THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, CHINESE CURATORS HAD ALWAYS FLOWN ON THE PLANES WITH THE OBJECTS AND THE CHINESE SIDE DEFINITELY EXPECTED THE PRACTICE TO BE FOLLOWED AGAIN THIS TIME, ESPECIALLY AS ONLY FIVE PEOPLE WERE INVOLVED. AMERICAN PLANS TO HAVE US GUARDS AND POSSIBLY A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON THE AIRCRAFT WERE QUESTIONS THE CHINESE SIDE WOULD WANT TO STUDY. BROOKS POINTED OUT AGAIN THAT THE QUESTION OF SECURITY FOR THE OBJECTS ON THE AIRPLANES WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE US SIDE UNTIL THE OBJECTS ARRIVED ON CHINESE SOIL AND THAT THE PLAN TO HAVE GUARDS ON THE FLIGHTS WAS IN FULFILLMENT OF THAT RESPONSIBILITY. HSIAO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD OUR POINT BUT WOULD HAVE TO CHECK IT OUT.

C. SECURITY LIABILITY: HSIAO AGREED THAT OVERALL SECURITY FOR THE OBJECTS WOULD BECOME A CHINESE RESPONSIBILITY AFTER THE PLANES HAD LANDED IN PEKING. HOWEVER, HE WENT TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTH TO SAY THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO GENERAL EXTERNAL SECURITY ONLY AND THIS DID NOT RELIEVE THE US SIDE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONDITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL OBJECTS UNTIL AFTER THE CRATES HAD BEEN OPENED AND THE OBJECTS FOUND TO BE IN GOOD ORDER. US RESPONSIBILITY WOULD END FORMALLY WITH THE SIGNING OF THE TURNOVER AGREEMENT. HSIAO COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT THE FORMAL CEREMONY WOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE PALACE MUSEUM BUT HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK ON THIS. THE ISSUE OF US LIABILITY FOR OBJECTS DAMAGED DID NOT COME UP.

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3. HSIAO PROMISED US HE WOULD CALL IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO SET UP ANOTHER MEETING TO PASS ON FURTHER CHINESE COMMENTS ON THE RETURN OF THE EXHIBITION OBJECTS.
BUSH

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